

The Fences Between Us: the Diary of Piper Davis

By Kirby Larson

Piper Davis lives in Seattle in 1941 with her brother Hank, older sister Maggie, and father who serves the Japanese Baptist Church as pastor. Life is good for this 13-year old girl who is looking forward to her eighth grade year of school and life with a boyfriend. When Brother Hank signs up for duty with the Navy, Piper's good life starts to unravel. Pearl Harbor is attacked and the family anxiously waits to hear from Hank as the United States declares war. Soon the prejudices against the American Japanese people of the community run high and the the government steps in, arresting Japanese men and making the decision to move all people of Japanese descent to holding camps. Pastor Davis picks up Piper and moves so he can minister to the Japanese people of the Minidoka War Relocation Camp in Idaho. At first Piper hates being taken away from her friends and home, but as she witnesses the hard life of camp she does her best to help in any way she can to make life a bit easier for her Japanese friends. This "Dear American" series book is written in the diary format that is found in the rest of the series. Larson has taken many historical facts and woven a story describing life in a relocation camp and the emotional atmosphere of the times that isn't often included in other books about World War II. Written for 7th grade and up this descriptive novel about the American home front is a great resource for public and school libraries as students explore life behind the war. The author has included a note about Life in America in 1941 and also photos pertaining to the story.

Pat Thompson WSC

The Opposite of Love

By Helen Bebedict

17- year- old Madge lives in a small poor town in Pennsylvania with her mom who is illegally in the United States. She has never met her Jamaican father. Being of mixed race in a small white community, she has never fit in. While staying with her cousin in New York she befriends a young black boy who is a victim of child abuse. She brings four- year- old Tim home with her thinking this has to be better for him. Has she made the right choice? This book is recommended for grades 9 and up. The basis behind this book, racism and child abuse, are good but the book drags. Possibly the author is trying to deal with too many different subjects and really seems to get nowhere with it. Also use caution as the subject matter is definitely young adult and not meant for young readers as the reading level might have you think.

Diane Limoges

The Red Necklace

By Sally Gardner

The lives of Sido, an heiress and Yann, a magician helper are intertwined in the midst of the French Revolution. The two sides of the story, while different, still accomplish telling the same story without discrediting the other. Their lives are intertwined through Count Kalliovski, his deals, and the reoccurring necklaces around the necks of the dead. This book is recommended for upper middle school through high school and as a great addition to any library. This is definitely one of the better historical fiction books. This book includes facts which are flawlessly woven into the story without appearing foreign to the plot. I absolutely loved it! Definitely sequel worthy!

Whitney Drahota

Bettie on the High Wire

By Lisa Railsbeck

This is the narrative of a third world child adopted by nice people and given a home in suburban America. This book is recommended for grades 4- 6 and as an addition to any library. This book is a humorous look at what it means to be a member of a family and to be loved and accepted.

Latricia Olson

Happy King Julian Family

By Olivia London

King Julian declares a day King Julian Day, which is a day when all the animals are to honor him. The animals decide to participate and put up with King Julian's crazy ways because they are looking forward to the candy in a piñata. I recommend this book for K- 2nd grades in any library setting. Children who enjoy the Madagascar movies may be attracted to this book.

Latricia Olson

Dolphins

By Seymour Simon

Dolphins and porpoises are both whales, but they are not the same. We already know dolphins are intelligent, curious, and playful. They can also travel hundreds of miles in search of a variety of fish, squid and shrimp. The greatest threat to the dolphin family is humans. I recommend this book for grades 4th- 8th grade in any library setting. Dolphins are Fantastic! Very engaging to read, it is factual without being dry.

Elaine Tobias

Here Comes Gosling

By Sandy Asher

Froggy is so excited about a visit from Goose, Gander and their new gosling. He spends most of the day preparing for their arrival. When Goose and Gander finally arrive Gosling can't quit crying. Froggy decides to hide and wait until Gosling quits crying. Goose and Gander do everything to console the baby but he will not quit crying until Froggy comes out of hiding. This book is recommended for 2nd graders in any library. This book had a cute story line with sing song phrases to it. Children will love the cute gosling and frog. It would be a great addition to any library. Kids will enjoy this story.

Lara Morrow

The Terrible Plop

By Ursula Dubosarsky

This story is derived from the story Chicken Little. Rabbits hear an apple fall into the water and assume it is something terrible that made that sound. Before they really know what made the sound they run to warn the other animals. Until the big bear challenges them. This book is recommended for grades 2- 3 at any library. The illustrations were interesting because the author used texture in some of the items in the book. This book has a good lesson to teach children, that is, to not make a big deal about something that is really small.

Lara Morrow

Lemonade Club

By Patricia Polacco

Traci and Marilyn are best friends and they are in Miss. Wichelman's fifth- grade class. Traci notices that her friend seems tired all the time and she is losing weight without even trying. Marilyn has Leukemia and a tough time ahead. But her friends in the Lemonade Club and her teacher help her pull through it. Then they learn Miss. Wichelman has challenges ahead of her as well (Breast Cancer) the Lemonade Club supports her as well. This book is recommended for grades 2- 5 at any library. Wow! Excellent! You've done it again Patricia Polacco.

Elaine Tobias

Voyage to the Pharos

By Sarah Gauch

Dino is just a boy and his father has always told him he was too young to go with him on the journeys he takes as a ship's cook, until now. Finally his father agreed to let him go along to Greece on a four day journey. Most of the time he's bored helping cooking and such. Until the ship gets into trouble in a storm, then it's Dino's job to climb the mast and search for any sign of land. After what seems to be a very long, wet and rainy time he spots it. A pin prick of light, "the Pharos", a 400-foot light house his father has told him about, which he can see as they get closer. Not only does he get to see, he helps guide the ship safely into harbor during a storm. I recommend this book for 4- 6th grades in any library. The book was just ok, nothing great.

Elaine Tobias

Samirah's Ride: A story of an Arabian Filly

By Annie Wedekind

This story in the Breyer Horse Collections is told from Samirah's point of view. When Samirah arrives on Cold Creek Ranch, Utah she has to get acclimated to new humans and also the herd of horses that help to make up the dude ranch that young Jasper and her family run. As Jasper and Samirah develop a close relationship the many adventures begin that happen over a course of several years. Female readers from age 9 and up will thoroughly enjoy this story, but let's hope that horse loving male readers will also pick up the volume that describes life and action on a dude ranch. A dramatic exciting ending to the book keep the reader involved and turning the pages to see what happens next. Recommended for public and school libraries, I will be purchasing the series for my grandchildren to enjoy.

Pat Thompson, WSC

Angels Among Us

By Leena Lane

This book contains twelve stories related to a variety of Bible verses, this book shows the part angels play in Christian beliefs. Each two page story showcases events that are drawn from both testaments. Young children will enjoy this book if it is read to them by adults. I recommend this for any library. This book is accompanied by mystical and curious depictions of angels and other characters. It portrays the people and heavenly beings in a variety of ethnic groups. Parents will want to pre-read this book before sharing it with their children to discern whether the stories are close to their religious beliefs.

MeMe Smith- Schuyler Public Library

Faithful

Janet Fox

The year is 1094 and 16- year- old Maggie Bennet and her dad are in Yellowstone National Park. Maggie is led to believe that they are following the trail of her mother who disappeared the previous year. Having grown up living in high society where she was waited on hand and foot, Maggie is having a hard time adjusting and wants to move back to Newport and live with her grandparents so she can have her big debut and find a rich husband. Then she meets Tom Rowland and everything changes. Maggie soon learns that she is not as much of a pretty little rich girl as she first thought. This book is recommended for grades 8 and up.

Though the historical facts get twisted from time to time and the first couple of chapters tend to drag, young readers will still find it enjoyable.

Diane Limogess

On Viney's Mountain

By Joan Donaldson

It is October 1879 and 16- year- old Viney Walker lives in the Cumberland Mountains with her sister Lizzie and her brother Jacob. Viney is making out a living and using her artistic abilities weaving blankets when she has the time. When a group of men from England move into her mountains and cut down the trees to build a town Viney is not happy. On the other hand Lizzie sees this as a way to find herself a man who will take her away from the poverty. Just as Viney learns to accept the changes and falls in love, disaster hits the new community and once again things are beyond Viney's control. Will life ever be simple? I recommend this book for 7th- 9th grades. Though fictional, this story is based on the life of Dicey Fletcher who grew up in Cumberland Mountains where the Rugby colonists settled. Young readers will get a feel for what it was like to grow up in the Appellation Mountains in the late 19th century and the struggles both to live and to accept changes that were thrust upon them. Use caution because the subject matter isn't fourth grade level.

Diane Limoges

Zenith

By Julie Bertagna

Mara, Fox and Tuck fight their own inner demons as they deal with a world that has changed and continues to rapidly evolve due to global warming. A fantastical tale that refers to past historical events and grasps at anticipated future happenings, Zenith prompts readers to explore a life negatively impacted by a disaster of monumental proportions. Although brave and willing to take risks, the characters try to remain loyal to their own ethical principles as they deal with each other's personal strengths and shortcomings. This book would be great for Jr. High and up because the subject matter may be questioned by parents. I recommend this book for any library. This title is the second in the trilogy. Although this book can be read on

its own, readers will reap the most enjoyment if they have acquainted themselves with the characters and story line from the first installment.

MeMe Smith- Schuyler Public library

Something Wickedly Weird: The Darkling Curse

By Chris Mould

Young Stanley Buggles has been enjoying his carefree life at Candlestick Hall, a historic mansion he inherited from his great- uncle. Suddenly an onslaught of noisy, dirty crows descends on his home and begins a relentless and intimidating attack on Stanley and his caretakers. This unwelcome event is followed by the invasion of the Darkling family into the residence with their claim of ownership of the famed Hall. Stanley and friends must deal with these scary inconveniences while trying to sort out the mysteries displayed in a historical map. The Darkling Curse should appeal to youngsters looking for mystery, suspense and dark humor and those familiar with the previous three books in the series. This title is recommended for 4th grade and up, and any library. Black and white drawings of creepy characters with big eyes and unkempt hair emphasize the descriptions of the individuals portrayed in this tale. Although the book can be read without reading the previous volumes, comprehension and enjoyment would definitely be enhanced by sequential reading of the stories.

MeMe Smith- Scuyhler Public Library

Once

By Morris Gleitzman

Once there was a boy named Felix. His parents dropped him off in a Polish orphanage so that they could go and fix the problems with their Jewish bookshop. Three years and eight months later, Nazis come to the orphanage and start burning books. Felix decides to run away to warn his parents and save their books from the Nazis. However, when Felix gets home, the books are all gone, someone else is living in his house, and he can't find any Jewish people. So, he decides to travel to the city thinking all the Jewish booksellers and booklovers may have gone there. As Felix begins to see more and more, slowly he realizes that the Nazis hate more than Jewish books; they hate Jews. But by now, it is too late. Felix is trapped, hiding in the ghetto, and the Nazis are beginning to send the Jews to the countryside to die. This is a powerful book about the Holocaust written from the innocent viewpoint of a child. It would be a good way to slowly introduce the concept to younger readers in the middle grades. Consideration should be given to some of the more violent images that are necessary for such a book since these could be disturbing to some readers. Still, the author shows restraint where needed. Once ends just shy of the death camps and in the end provides a bit of hope for the main character and its reader.

-Valerie Knight, WSC